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NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS

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"Every sizable pine and oak, or other forest tree, cut down within the memory of man! As if individual speculators were to be allowed to export the clouds out of the sky, or the stars out of the firmament, one by one. We shall be reduced to gnaw the very crust of the earth for nutriment."

--Henry David Thoreau

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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
1840 MINTWOOD PLACE, N.W.
WASHINGTON 9, D.C.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

ANNUAL MEETING of the Nature Conservancy will be at 2 P.M. Monday, September 8, in Room 210, Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. This will be in conjunction with the meetings of the Ecological Society of America and other member societies of the American Institute of Biological Sciences. (Please make a note of the time and place of the meeting; it will not be included in the A.I.B.S. program.)

Agenda will be as follows:

Reports by selected state representatives on:
(a) Recent progress.
(b) General status of natural areas in the state.
(c) Immediate steps that should be taken (goals for the next year).

Reports by officers and committee chairmen of recent progress of the Conservancy.

Action on the proposal to increase the Board of Governors maximum to thirty-four.

Discussion of the proposal to further revise the constitution to change set-up and responsibilities of the Committee on the Study of Plant and Animal Communities and the Committee for the Preservation of Natural Conditions.

Action on proposed new committees, including the following: Endangered Species, Population Problems, Publicity and Education, Meeting Arrangements, Legal Problems, and Finance Committees.

Reports and action on two important special developments concerning preservation activities in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Discussion and action on policy concerning regional and state operations.

Discussion and action on 1953 budget.

Discussion and action on proposed new projects.

Action on proposed resolutions.

Election of officers.

Come to the meeting! You will hear good news about the Conservancy's development, and you will help plan the future of America's nature preservation movement!

A LOOK ELSEWHERE

THE NETHERLANDS is saving samples of its varied landscapes and vegetation despite the pressure of a dense population. About 25,000 hectares have already been set aside and an estimated 25,000 ha. more are needed to preserve samples of the important types, according to an article by H. P. Groter and V. Westhoff in Natuur en Landshaft, January 1952. (1 hectare equals 2.47 acres.)

In the Netherlands, estuaries, extensive shoal areas, and fine sand dunes are found side by side, a combination rarely found anywhere else in the world. A great portion of the Netherlands soil was formed in the Pleistocene period and here variations in height result in a mixture of dry, moist, and boggy grounds. The chalk region in the province of Limburg has distinctive features. The Netherlands climate varies from north to south and from east to west, and differences in the composition of plant and animal communities result.

The exceedingly rapid growth of population has caused the total of natural areas to shrink from 900,000 ha. in 1833 to 210,000 ha. in 1950.

Of the sand dune areas, many boggy valleys have been drained in consequence of water catchment. However, a fair number of representative areas have been preserved.

Of the lakes and bogs in the low fen area, a characteristic Dutch region with no parallel anywhere in the world, some parts have been reserved and further purchases are still being made. These areas are often of great interest from the ornithological as well as the botanical point of view. Purple heron, bittern, little bittern, marsh harrier, spoonbill, and black tern are among the species breeding in this region.

Of the boggy meadows and molinia bogs, hardly any have been preserved and it is just these areas with their remarkable semi-natural flora and fauna that are at present most vulnerable.

Of the tidal mud-flats and shoals, a number of areas have been set aside as wildfowl refuges where no shooting is allowed so that both breeders and migrants may find a safe abode there.

The preservation of forests is particularly important in the Netherlands, which is among the European countries with the smallest proportion of forest area. Therefore it is a pity that hardly any natural hardwood forests have been preserved.

Considerable tracts of heath and inland sand-dunes have been secured by the organizations for the promotion of nature reserves. But peat-moors, which in former days covered much of the north-east of the country, have been reclaimed almost entirely, and only a few areas, and not very representative ones at that, have been reserved. Of the oligotrophic bogs, too, an insufficient area has been preserved.

Special attention has to be given to the remaining natural springs and brooks, features that have always been comparatively rare in a flat country like this, and that are particularly vulnerable.

INTERNATIONAL

CONSERVANCY DELEGATES to the Venezuela conference of the International Union for the Protection of Nature will be Wm. Vogt and Lucien L. Pohl. Richard H. Pough will also represent the Conservancy. The session, which coincides with the annual meeting of the Conservancy, will include reports of the various commissions of the Union such as the Survival Service which has been cooperating with UNESCO. The principle program was briefly outlined in the July News.

JAPANESE PARKS are currently threatened by hydro-electric expansion, declares the newly formed Japanese Society for the Protection of Nature. It has appealed for help to the International Union for the Protection of Nature.

MEXICAN NATURAL HISTORY is being aided by conservation organizations in the United States cooperating in a study of wildlife conditions along the International Highway from the U.S. to Guatemala. The work, led by Dr. Enrique Beltran, should do much for both research and education in Mexico.

TROPICS AS WELL AS TUNDRA need preservation today. The Madagascan government has recently set aside almost 150,000 acres, its twelfth natural reserve. Its mountains with their primitive forests are suspected of harboring native animals new to science.

NATIONAL

ALASKAN development proceeds as additional homesites are made available by government agencies which have recently released 29,000 acres of the Tongass National Forest. Director Marion Clawson of the Bureau of Land Management announced that the eliminated lands "have been determined not primarily suitable for national forest." The action was in cooperation with the U. S. Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture. Scenic strips along the highways are being retained for the preservation and protection of scenic and of recreational values.

CALIFORNIA'S Merced County will have a waterfowl feeding area of more than 2000 acres in the San Joaquin Valley when purchases have been completed under the wildlife management program. While such areas are hardly inviolate nature sanctuaries, they nevertheless help maintain a variety of habitats and aid in the local preservation of species. A primary purpose in this case is to reduce crop losses from waterfowl on neighboring agricultural lands. (The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service reports cooperative surveys estimating that "the fall . . . flight of ducks in the Pacific Flyway will show a moderate to considerable increase over 1951.")

FLORIDA in 1951 began acquisition of two waterfowl refuges, including 100,000 acres of land in Water Conservation Area No. 1 in Palm Beach County. The wet lands with interspersed hammocks should make valuable wintering areas for waterfowl, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

NEW MEXICO: STATE OF THE MONTH

NEW MEXICO citizens rose in vigorous protest at a hearing held on August 7 in Silver City regarding proposals made by the Forest Service to remove 188,000 acres from the Gila Primitive Area in the Gila National Forest. Dr. H. W. James, retiring president of New Mexico Western College, presented recommendations of the Gila Wilderness Committee, representing almost every civic group in adjacent counties.*

The Committee insisted the primeval ponderosa pine forests of the Iron Creek Mesa, the wild open Indian Creek Country, and the forested Copperas Canyon region be preserved as inviolate wilderness. On the other hand, certain minor adjustments of boundary were approved as was withdrawal from protection of a mile-wide corridor bordering the long-established road to Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, for these sections include artificial developments on privately owned land. The regional forester was severely censured for proposing such drastic whittling of the Primitive Area and was called on to enforce the regulations prohibiting entry to the region by motor vehicles.

The controversy developed when the Forest Service proposed cutting the size of the reservation prior to its reclassification as a Wilderness Area by the Secretary of Agriculture. (Primitive Areas are set aside under older regulations and are being gradually reclassified as Wilderness Areas.) While the witnesses at the hearing agreed to the change in status, they saw no need for major reductions in the area. The fact that local residents were almost unanimous in favor of preserving the wilderness is an encouraging indication of the growth of public sentiment during the past few years.

Fred M. Packard, Executive Secretary of the National Parks Association, read a statement for the Nature Conservancy.

". .If illegal invasion of the eastern portion of the area by autos is cause for its elimination, then it will be only a matter of time before helicopters or other vehicles will force the elimination of all wilderness areas. . We do not believe there is such a thing as a 'self-protecting' topographic feature and we hope it will be possible to keep more than bare rock in our wilderness system.

"There is urgent need for designation of more rather than less of the open grassland and desert types as wilderness. Such areas will always present a challange to the administrator because of the ease of invasion by autos and other means. That is no cause for giving them up."

* Including The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Bayard Lions Club, Silver City Lions, Catron County Chamber of Commerce, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Daughters of the American Revolution, Elks, Farm & Livestock Bureau of Cliff, Garden Club at Bayard, Gila District Home Demonstration Club, Grant County Game Protective Association, Miners District Game Protective Association, Lordsburg Sportsmen's Association, Masonic Lodge, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Women's Club, and 24 Club.

* * * * *

MASSACHUSETTS has been contemplating the sacrifice of one end of the famous Arnold Arboretum in order to build a State Medical School. The matter is on the agenda for an organizational meeting of the Massachusetts Conservancy on Sept. 6 at Springfield College, Springfield.

NORTH CAROLINA's Cape Hattaras seashore will be saved because of the purchasing program being started by the National Park Service. $618,000 in State funds are being matched by unnamed donors. The area includes over 11,000 acres already owned by the state and federal governments. It will be known as the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area. This portion of the Outer Banks of North Carolina is said to comprise one of the few extensive stretches of undeveloped seashore remaining on the Atlantic coast.

The 1937 Congressional act authorizing the purchasing provided that "Except for certain portions of the area, deemed to be especially adapted for recreational uses. . . the area shall be permanently reserved as a primitive wilderness and no development of the project or plan for the convenience of visitors shall be undertaken which is incompatible with the protection of the unique flora and fauna or the physiographic conditions now prevailing in this area."

A 1940 amendment, however, does permit hunting on the waters of the sounds and in certain other areas. But there seems no doubt that the seashore area will be an excellent nature reserve.

* * * * *

WISCONSIN's Flambeau Forest continues its fifty-year history as a focus of attention for alert conservationists. Today the question is how much should be managed according to modern, multiple-use forestry and how much should be left as a wilderness area for research and for recreation of those willing to "go in" without wheels, gasoline, noise, and speed?

In July, the Flambeau Committee recommended an inviolate wilderness core not less than a mile wide on both sides of "the last wilderness river in the State of Wisconsin", a buffer zone flanking the wilderness, with limited forest management; and the remainder of the forest for multiple-use forestry including various recreational facilities.

* * * * *

From the parable of the talents, a Wisconsin cleric, Rev. Orvis M. Hanson, drew two lessons: we must not neglect our heritage, and we must improve our heritage.

This sermon, reprinted in full as the lead article in the June Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin, treats the ethics of conservation. We are not only our brother's keeper, but also the keeper of his environment.

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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
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The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific object is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and esthetic values. They also afford a home for the multitude of kinds of living things that would otherwise vanish from the earth, destroyed by our civilization.

The work of our organization began in 1917 under the direction of a committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946 the Ecologists Union was formed to take over these tasks. In 1950 its name was changed to the Nature Conservancy.

We, the members of the Nature Conservancy, invite you to join with us in this work. Membership is open to both individuals and organizations. Your contribution is an allowable income tax deduction.

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SHELLFISH METHODS OPEN TO QUESTION

Dr. Levi of the Nature Conservancy's Committee on Exotics reports correspondence indicating that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently attempting to introduce the European Oyster (Ostrea edulis) into the northern part of the western Atlantic. While there will probably not be any conflict with native species because of different ecological requirements, past introductions of oysters have had bad results. The introduction of the Japanese oyster on our West Coast was accompanied by a number of predators and parasites. The slipper limpet (Crepidula fornicata) followed the American oyster to Europe and has become a major pest there. Our eastern oyster drill has followed our oyster to Europe and also to the West Coast where transplantation experiments have been made. Although artificial raising of larvae can prevent translocation of parasites, it is not apparent that this precaution is now being taken.

LOOK-AT-BOTH-SIDES DEPARTMENT

"Occasionally when some new Reclamation project is proposed, hunters, fishermen, and other lovers of the great outdoors seem to fear that the development will impair or destroy recreational opportunities." So states a Bureau of Reclamation news release announcing a new survey of recreation and wildlife values derived from western Reclamation projects. Copies of the report may be obtained from the Bureau of Reclamation, Room 7622, Interior Bldg., Washington, D.C. Conservationists will want to study this document and will realize that while it is difficult to weigh "sleek, chromium-trimmed yachts" on a Reclamation reservoir against the last stand of a rare plant, large segments of our citizens need educating so they will weigh the values of both as objectively as possible.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COOPERATION

The Outdoor Writers' Association of America at its annual meeting stressed the importance of ascertaining enough facts for careful management of natural resources and then strongly recommended that ". . all outdoor writers possess themselves of facts available to guide their informational and educational endeavors." Nature Conservancy members are urged to help provide these outdoor writers with the facts which they need, real facts, objectively procured. Truth winged with ideas of constructive imaginations can lead to progress. Make it your business to know and help the outdoor writers in your own community.